

FOUSTE: STATUE: Veteran works to bring art out again

Suspect charged

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Following his arrest, Fousté posted bail and was released on a conditional release agreement that specifies he will have no contact with the alleged victim, Shirley Scott, 63. Additional conditions may or may not be ordered at his upcoming arraignment.

If Fousté violates the no contact order he will be re-arrested for violation of the release agreement, according to Wallowa County Sheriff Steve Rogers.

Fousté did not have his weapons with him at the time of surrender and law enforcement cannot enter his home to seize them without evidence of "clear and present danger" and the issuance of another warrant, Rogers said.

"Everything from this point on is up to a judge," said Rogers. "People get very upset when we do a catch and release like this, but everyone has the right to bail."

WCSO fielded the dramatic response the evening of May 11 after the initial call from the remote Imnaha River Woods area on the edge of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area seemed to indicate a hostage situation.

But Fousté had taken to the woods, allegedly armed with multiple weapons and 300 rounds of ammunition, by the time law enforcement arrived.

The reinforced Sheriff's department then waited for an armored vehicle to arrive from Bend to allow safe extraction of Scott and her son Jason Scott, 41, but Fousté returned to the home at approximately midnight and allegedly began threatening to shoot both Scott and law enforcement.

At that point, Sheriff's deputies moved in to retrieve Scott and her son without the cover of the armored vehicle. Fousté again left the area as deputies converged.

Rogers emphasized that management of incidents in the remote area is based on extensive training in risk management.

Law enforcement in rural areas also has a more than average knowledge of the individuals involved in incidents.

"We know where Fousté is," said Rogers. "We'll know if he violates his conditions of release."

SNOWPACK: Rain could ease drought's effects

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But no one is banking on that. "The winter of 2015 will go down in Oregon's history books as the year that was dominated by bare ground in the mountains," said Julie Koeberle, Natural Resources Conservation Service hydrologist.

As of May 1, according to the National Drought Monitor, the statewide snow pack was at 11 percent of normal, and only 15 out of 112 snow monitoring stations had any snow left at all. Sixty percent of the long-term snow pack monitoring sites set records for the lowest peak snow pack levels, as well as the earliest peak dates, since measurements began more than 30 years ago. One third of the snow measurement sites in the state didn't receive enough snow to build a seasonal snow pack this year at all.

"Because the snow pack levels peaked well below normal across the state, there is a mountain snow pack deficit that amounts to several feet of frozen water that would typically be stored in the snow pack, but is not present this year," Koeberle said. "Oregon's streams and rivers that depend on this snow pack for summer flows will be significantly lower than normal this year. This means that there will likely be water shortages this summer; especially for water users that depend on stream flow that is not tied to a reservoir," Koeberle said. "Water users should brace for a dry and hot summer with limited water supplies."

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The project was quite an undertaking for the foundry and upon its completion, local veterans and their families were publicly invited to come view the statue before it was shipped.

This period was particularly memorable to Roberts because his father, WWII veteran Ivan Roberts, was photographed beside the statue after it was loaded onto a trailer. "It had a special meaning to my dad," Errol said.

Ivan Roberts died in 2001. The framed photograph of him beside the 50-man statue today hangs on a wall in Errol and Barbara's home.

The couple took their latest trip to Branson the last week of April. Although friends

and family members had accompanied them on previous journeys, this year's entourage was largest of all, utilizing the services of La Grande-based Allegre Travel. Around two dozen people went, including Errol and Barbara, half a dozen other veterans from La Grande, and other friends from the region, including Wallowa residents Red and Elsie Evans.

Naturally the Veterans Memorial Museum was a prominent part of the group's itinerary, but after they arrived in Missouri, a knowledgeable bus driver imparted a shattering piece of news: the museum no longer had the 50-man statue, and the statue's current location was not publicly known.

Roberts' subsequent inquiries led him to someone who

did know: Charlie Engram, co-host of "Good Morning Ozarks," a weekday morning show on radio station KLFC in Branson. Engram, who is also a Vietnam veteran, shies from discussing the statue's whereabouts, but in talking to Roberts soon decided to help arrange for Roberts and the group's other veterans to visit it. The visit indeed occurred on April 27, and the following morning Roberts and another veteran from his group, La Grande resident John Craig, were interview guests on "Good Morning Ozarks."

By design, the fate of the 50-man statue was the main topic during the pair's nearly half-hour appearance. A podcast of the interview can be downloaded free of charge at KLFCradio.com.

Engram, who was already keenly interested in the statue before the Northeast Oregonians' arrival, says he's feeling more encouraged than ever that people will rally to the cause of providing it a publicly accessible home. He plans to start a non-profit organization that can raise funds to purchase the statue at an estimated price of \$1.5 million. The non-profit could then loan the statue to a museum — possibly to its old home at Veterans Memorial Museum, or perhaps

to the National Museum of the Pacific War, in Fredericksburg, Texas.

Roberts says he hopes the massive bronze stays in Branson. Engram says he'd like that too, but what matters most is that "it has a resting place, whether it be in Branson or in Fredericksburg."

As plans take further shape Engram plans to announce further details, probably to eventually include a website the public can use to interact with the organization.

MARIJUANA: Joseph bans dispensaries

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The city's previous moratorium on banning marijuana dispensaries ran out on May 1 of this year. The council had gotten a jump on the moratorium expiration by having city attorney Wyatt Baum write an ordinance stipulating the prohibition of a dispensary within 1,000 feet of any public facility where children are known to congregate.

Sands opened the discussion by reading a letter from a citizen who wrote in favor of medical marijuana dispensaries for those with chronic illnesses. Sands said the ordinance does not prohibit dispensaries, but rather stipulates the area where dispensaries are located. After Sands read the ordinance aloud, the ordinance was put to a vote and passed through the council unanimously.

While the ordinance appears to allow for the estab-

lishment of a facility within the city's commercial or industrial zones, Section 11.040 of the ordinance contains a number of prohibitions regarding such a dispensary. These prohibitions include: No placement within 1,000 feet of licensed day-care centers, public libraries and parks, private or public schools, or community recreation/sports facilities attended primarily by minors.

A map provided by the council identifies the city park, Joseph Charter School, the public library, the old elementary school leased by the U.S. Forest Service, the little league fields and even Community Bank as falling under the public facilities caveat.

In other words, the ordinance negates the possibility of a dispensary within the city limits as the 1,000-foot buffer zones around these facilities and buildings effectively cover the entire city limits.

Sands said this was not intentional on the city council's part. "We're just going by the guidelines that most cities use — a thousand foot from schools and any place where kids congregate. Joseph is a smaller city and that's how it works," Sands said.

Rumor stoked by posts on Facebook held that a large number of agitated citizens would attend the meeting to debate the dispensary issue. In fact, only one person who was not a regular observer attended the meeting. "It's kind of typical. People would rather grouse on Facebook instead of coming to a meeting," Sands said.

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